

**Remarks**

Claims 61-120 are pending in the present application. By the present amendment, Claims 61, 63, 105, 117 and 119-120 have been amended and claim 118 has been canceled. No new matter has been entered.

**Rejection under § 103(a)**

Independent claims 61, 63, 105, 117 and 119-120 have each been amended to recite positioning a cladding material within at least a substantial portion of a pair of cladding containment regions. Applicants respectfully submit that the references relied upon in the Office Action of June 15, 2006 could not properly support an anticipatory or obviousness rejection of the presently pending claims.

Specifically, none of the references cited under 35 U.S.C. §103 teach or suggest positioning a cladding material within at least a substantial portion of a pair of cladding containment regions. Erben et al. merely suggests sandwiching an optical core layer between cladding layers and not a region for containing the cladding. Similarly, Bosc et al. fails to disclose cladding containment regions, but, however, does suggest the use of a covering layer to completely cover the guide cores. In contrast, the cladding containment regions recited in the presently pending claims serve as an effective means by which the cladding material, which is often initially a substantially non-rigid material like a viscous fluid, may be presented in the device in a stable manner. Neither the Erben et al. nor the Bosc et al. reference teach or suggest cladding containment regions as recited in the present claims. Additionally, neither Erben et al. nor Bosc et al. teach or suggest cladding containment regions that would serve as an effective means by which cladding material, which is often initially a substantially non-rigid material like a viscous fluid, may be presented in a stable manner. As such, Applicants respectfully submit that these broad teachings fall far short of teaching or suggesting positioning a cladding material within at least a substantial portion of a pair of cladding containment regions as in recited in the present claims.

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### **Conclusion**

The Applicants respectfully submit that, in view of the above amendments and remarks, the application is now in condition for allowance. The Examiner is encouraged to contact the undersigned to resolve efficiently any formal matters or to discuss any aspects of the application or of this response. Otherwise, early notification of allowable subject matter is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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